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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

APR 21 1962

CUBA RELEASES FLYER

Hijacked Pilot Tells Story

By WOODRUFF MEAD

As Told to the Associated Press

MIAMI, Fla., April 21.—"I can't tell you how scared I was and there's no way to describe the filth of that Principe Prison where they had us for a while. But I'll start at the beginning."

"I took off with two men I thought were Harold Moore

Woodruff Mead, 23, of Albertson, N. Y., has been flying for American Aviation Corp. in Miami. A week ago, he took two men up for a demonstration flight and didn't come home until last night. This is his story...

and Jim Eastham. They wanted a demonstration ride and to take moving pictures of Miami Beach. We left Tamiami Airport 20 minutes after 11 on the 13th—yes, Friday; the 13th, I'll never forget."

(When the three returned to Miami by commercial airliner yesterday, a week later, the FBI arrested the two passengers on charges of kidnapping and hijacking. Mr. Mead said he still didn't know the reason for his passengers' actions.)

"I was at 3,000 feet over Crandon Park (a recreation area at the ocean front) and Eastham, sitting next to me, was trying out the controls. A couple minutes later, I asked the what those 'idiot' south of us were. He said, 'I don't see what's down there.'"

"Just then I saw a hotel in the back of my seat. They told me to head south along the coast line to the Biscayne Bridge (in the morning, I



WOODRUFF MEAD

"Then they told me to turn off shore and follow a bearing of 130 degrees to Cuba."

"Then they pulled the gun on me, Moore reached over and shut off the radio. There was no way for me to tell anyone what was going on."

"I hit Cuba about 20 miles east of Havana and followed a highway toward town, looking for a place to land. Finally, I saw an field. I didn't know it would turn out to be a military training field. On my final approach I saw machine guns pointed right at me—I was scared."

"We landed and I turned off the engine. A guard arrived and took us to operations bay. Then, they questioned us for about two hours each. I guess we were there 12 or 14 hours."

"Moore and Eastham told the Cubans they had forced me to fly to Havana. The Cubans asked me if I worked for the FBI, CIA, Immigration, and so on. They asked me if I liked 'socialismo'—they didn't say communism."

"They told me the penalty for violating Cuban air space was five years in jail. I was still scared."

"Finally, they took us into town to G-2 headquarters. They left us there—it must have been five days—in one room with a TV set. We had milk and a hard roll for breakfast. For lunch, we had fried bananas, french fries, bean soup and coffee. For supper, I got fried bananas again."

"I was questioned during this period by interrogators who didn't speak any good English. Finally, toward the end, I was told they believed I was telling the truth. They said I would probably have to go back to the States."

"They then took me to Principe Prison for five hours. That place is unbelievable. Men are living on hard stone floors. The bathrooms are filthy. I was scared to death."

"Finally, Thursday night, they took me from Principe to headquarters. They told me I was leaving in the morning."

"I was there two and a half days. I was scared. Also, when I was there, I asked if I would be in my plane again. They said 'no' and